

Public Consultations: Young people's perceptions

The Hong Kong Government conducts regular public engagement exercises on a range of topics. Current consultations include development on Lantau Island, a new franchised bus network, biodiversity strategy, electronic road pricing and retirement protection. This report considers how much young people know about these subjects and how often they respond to calls for views.



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Actions and attitudes

- 86% of the 520 18-34 year-olds polled knew something about government public consultations that have taken place over the past three years.
- Only 24% had ever given their views.
- Fewer than 30% considered that the main purpose of public consultations was to respond to people's hopes.
- Nevertheless, over 40% considered transparency to be the most important value for an ideal consultation exercise.

Concerns

- Over a third of poll respondents claimed they were unfamiliar with the issues.
- Over a quarter said that they lacked time to comment on consultation topics.
- Face-to-face interviews revealed that some young people did not understand information about issues under discussion or found it too lengthy.
- Interviewees also said that searching for information on government websites is considered complicated and time consuming because of lack of systematic organization of online government websites.

Overall, respondents to the poll gave the following average ratings on a scale of 0-10

- ⇒ 5.32 for the level of heed taken by the government to comments from the public
- ⇒ 5.34 for the quality of the account given of the outcome of consultation exercises
- ⇒ 5.36 for the clarity of explanations given of policy

Practical responses and suggestions

- Launch a one-stop-shop website where the public can obtain information on public consultation exercises and express their views.
- Update guidelines for public consultations which were last issued in 2003.

Comments from Youth I.D.E.A.S. group convener and deputy convener

Richard Cheng "There should be more transparency in distribution of information and the process for managing and analyzing views collected from people."

Yuri Hung "The government should make a thorough review of the procedures used for public consultations."